

# **2001 Appropriations Implementation Strategy**

## **National Fire Plan**

### **USDI National Park Service**



**November 10, 2000**

Recommended by: Dan O'Brien  
Dan O'Brien, Deputy Incident Commander

Date: November 10, 2000

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Rick Gale, Incident Commander

Date: November 10, 2000

## **Executive Summary**

The National Park Service (NPS) has developed this strategy to begin implementing the wildland fire authorities and programs in the 2001 Interior Appropriations Act (H.R.4578) and the President's Fire Initiative (known as the National Fire Plan). The National Fire Plan provides increased funding and direction to address wildland fire management needs that have grown during the past decade of increasingly severe fire seasons.

This NPS strategy outlines goals and actions in four fire management program areas: oversight and accountability for an expanded program, wildland fire preparedness, wildland fire operations (especially hazardous fuels reduction in wildland urban interface areas), and fire protection capabilities of rural fire districts. These strategies will be coordinated with other bureaus to ensure an interagency effort.

Oversight and Accountability - Successful implementation of the 2001 DOI Appropriations Act will require considerable oversight and direction from NPS Fire Management Program Center (FMPC) and Fire Management Leadership Board (FMLB). Interagency planning, coordination, and reporting at all levels will be critical to achieve agency goals and intent of the Act.

Wildland Fire Preparedness - Wildland fire preparedness provides the fire management organization with the capability to prevent, detect, or take prompt, effective initial attack suppression action on wildland fires. Staffing levels, management tools, and facilities will be supplemented to improve fire prevention, emergency fire readiness and support a broad range of fire management operations. Staffing changes will include hiring or contracting additional fire personnel and specialists and converting some positions from seasonal to permanent status to retain a cadre of professional firefighters and support staff. Hiring procedures and contracting tools will be used to efficiently obtain necessary staffing and services. In addition, computer systems and fire facilities will be improved to ensure safe and efficient operations.

Wildland Fire Operations - NPS wildland fire operations will be significantly increased to improve fire suppression capabilities and expand hazardous fuels reduction programs, with increased emphasis on alleviating threats to communities near National Park units. To meet planning and compliance requirements of an expanded program, environmental and cultural resource specialist support will be increased. In addition, new burned area rehabilitation guidelines will be implemented to mitigate short and long-term detrimental consequences of severe wildland fires.

Rural Fire Assistance – Effective response to wildland fires often requires a coordinated effort between NPS units and neighboring rural or volunteer fire departments who have limited resources. The 2001 Appropriations Act identifies a pilot effort to enhance the fire protection capability of rural fire districts through training, equipment purchase, and prevention activities on a cost-share basis.

The action items identified in this report will help the NPS achieve National Fire Plan goals and will be integrated into a cohesive interagency strategy.

## Background

Nearly seven million acres burned throughout the nation during the 2000 fire season, more than two times the ten-year national average. The extraordinary number, size, and in some cases, severity of these fires was due to a combination of factors including drought conditions, weather patterns, and a large number of lightning strikes. In addition, nearly a century of fire exclusion in areas that historically burned on a regular basis, along with other land-use practices, resulted in heavy fuel accumulations and altered vegetation structure. These conditions contribute to increased fire intensity, spread, and resistance to control.

Another compounding factor has been the growth of communities in areas adjacent to national parks and other open public lands, putting homes and other structures closer to areas where large fires occur. In recent years, wildland firefighters have spent more time and effort protecting structures than in earlier years. As a result of this increasingly complex situation, fire suppression needs exceeded the available federal, state, and local agency firefighting resources this year.

In response to this challenging fire season, the President and Congress approved a considerable budget increase for all federal wildland fire management agencies, including the National Park Service (NPS). Within the 2001 appropriation, Congress fully funded the normal year readiness and performance capability of the Interior bureaus and the Forest Service. In addition, a program to provide improved fire facilities was accelerated and new authorities were established to allow Interior bureaus to assist rural fire districts in developing improved suppression capability. These funds are intended to allow agencies to better prepare for wildland fires in 2001 and beyond, by making significant improvements in fire preparedness, fuels treatments, and other aspects of fire management. This budget increase is intended as a supplemental appropriation and Congress expects that current agency fire management programs will continue to be implemented.

The NPS mission is to protect and preserve the lands it manages for the enjoyment of future generations. Guided by this mandate, the fire management program focuses on restoring and maintaining natural processes associated with fire, while protecting human life and property. To help in achieving these long-term goals, the NPS has a comprehensive fire management program including hazardous fuels reduction, prescribed fire, wildland fire for resource benefit, and wildland fire suppression.

Barriers to full implementation of NPS and other federal fire management programs were identified in the 1995 Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. The 2001 Appropriations Act augments existing programs and helps overcome some of these barriers by providing funding and direction in the following program areas. Fire suppression capabilities will be increased to address the anticipated number and severity of wildland fires. The fuels management program will be expanded to reduce risks to communities and natural resources in high-risk areas. An enhanced burned area rehabilitation program is designed to prevent further degradation of resources following impacts of severe wildland fire. Lastly, a pilot rural fire assistance effort will enhance fire protection capabilities of rural fire districts.

## **Oversight and Accountability**

Successful implementation of the 2001 DOI Appropriations Act will require considerable oversight and direction from the NPS Fire Management Program Center and Fire Management Leadership Board. Interagency planning, coordination, and reporting at all levels will be critical to achieve agency goals and the intent of the Act.

**Goal:** Develop an oversight strategy to ensure successful implementation of the 2001 DOI Appropriations Act consistent with current agency policy and inform Congress and the public about implementation progress.

**Action:** Develop strategies and prioritize funding for staffing, planning, and support needs.

Lead: Chair, NPS Fire Management Leadership Board

Date: November 17, 2000

**Action:** Finalize the Communications Plan to provide accurate and timely information about NPS actions to implement the National Fire Plan to all audiences including public, media, employees, agency partners, and other interested parties.

Lead: Roberta D'Amico

Date: November 30, 2000

**Action:** Complete the NPS Financial Report showing how 2001 DOI Appropriations funds will be spent.

Lead: Steve Botti, Dean Berg

Date: December 1, 2000

**Action:** Complete the NPS Action Plan describing in detail the work to be accomplished within each funding allocation and coordinate with other bureaus.

Lead: Tom Zimmerman

Date: December 1, 2000

**Action:** Prepare the NPS Performance Report including a financial report and an updated action plan showing accomplishments.

Lead: Mike Warren

Date: November 1, 2001

**Action:** Prepare the final Federal/State Ten-year Comprehensive Strategy to ensure collaboration and coordination among all partners.

Lead: Rick Gale, Sue Vap

Date: August 1, 2001 (target)

## Wildland Fire Preparedness

Wildland fire preparedness provides the fire management organization with the capability to prevent, detect, or take prompt, effective initial attack suppression action on wildland fires. Staffing levels, management tools, and facilities will be supplemented to improve fire prevention, emergency fire readiness and support a broad range of fire management operations. Staffing changes will include hiring or contracting additional fire personnel and specialists and converting some positions from seasonal to permanent status to retain a cadre of professional firefighters and support staff. Hiring procedures and contracting tools will be used to efficiently obtain necessary staffing and services. In addition, computer systems and fire facilities will be improved to ensure safe and efficient operations.

### Workforce Development

Goal: Develop an effective strategy to address all aspects of workforce planning to meet the anticipated increase in the number, size, and complexities of wildland fire and hazard fuels reduction activities; coordinate strategies with other bureaus where possible.

Action: Prepare wildland fire staffing needs analysis addressing current deficiencies, conversion of existing positions, number of new positions, and extending length of seasonal employment.

Lead: Chair, Fire Management Leadership Board

Date: November 17, 2000

Action: Prepare technical, professional, and administrative staffing needs analysis addressing conversion of existing positions, number of new positions, and extending length of seasonal employment.

Lead: Chair, Fire Management Leadership Board

Date: November 17, 2000

Action: Position Management - Develop an effective organizational design to meet existing and future NPS fire workforce needs.

Lead: Chair, Fire Management Leadership Board

Date: TBD

Action: Classification - Analyze, identify, and utilize existing position descriptions (i.e. standard and/or existing). Where appropriate, develop new position descriptions aligned with approved organizational structures.

Lead: Merrie Johnson

Date: December 15, 2000

Action: Recruitment Outreach - Develop effective and appropriate methods of outreach to qualified and diverse pools of candidates for NPS wildland fire and hazardous fuels reduction positions.

Lead: Merrie Johnson

Date: November 9, 2000

Action: Develop training needs analysis based on anticipated skill level of additional workforce and implementation of new hazard fuels reduction programs (i.e. wildland urban interface contracting).

Lead: Merrie Johnson

Date: TBD

### Equipment

Goal: Improve suppression response capabilities with additional equipment.

Action: Conduct needs analysis to identify optimum number and locations for additional helicopters and engines.

Lead: Chair, Fire Management Leadership Board

Date: November 17, 2000

### Contracting and Grants

Goal: Facilitate the use of procurement contracts, grants, or agreements to accomplish elements of the NPS fire management program.

Action: Prepare an analysis to identify issues related to contracts for a wide range of fire management services. Issues include: a workload analysis for contracts/contracting personnel; an assessment of the training needs for contracting officer representatives (COR); and utilization of the electronic procurement acquisition process for fire management services.

Lead: Ken Till

Date: November 17, 2000

Action: Review grant authorities to identify the most appropriate and expeditious vehicle to distribute funds to non-federal entities for fuels treatment projects.

Lead: John Lissoway

Date: November 14, 2000

### Deferred Maintenance

Goal: Support current and anticipated growth of NPS fire staff and resources by providing adequate equipment, office and storage space necessary to ensure safe and efficient operations.

Action: Reissue project management information system update call for any NPS fire facilities construction.

Lead: Mike Warren

Date: December 31, 2000

Action: Continue development of DOI five-year wildland fire management facilities list.  
Lead: Mike Warren  
Date: Ongoing

Action: Evaluate leasing versus building new facilities, as preferred option. Consider leasing in municipalities and using construction funds in rural areas where necessary.  
Lead: Mike Warren  
Date: Ongoing

Action: Evaluate co-location of fire facilities in rural locations, including providing funding to local government, as the preferred option.  
Lead: Mike Warren  
Date: TBD

Action: Work with the Fire Management Leadership Board to develop a prioritization scheme beyond the DOI mandated process for wildland fire facilities.  
Lead: Mike Warren  
Date: TBD

### Computer Systems

Goal: Develop and maintain computer systems to improve capabilities of an expanded fire management program.

Action: Complete computer system needs analysis, including coordinated, state-of-the-art specifications/recommendations.  
Lead: Gladys Crabtree  
Date: TBD

### Prevention

Goal: Develop the NPS prevention program, in coordination with other bureaus and partners, to reduce the risk of unwanted wildland fire ignition.

Action: Develop a pilot fire prevention analysis process to incorporate into the NPS fire program budget analysis.  
Lead: Paul Broyles  
Date: October 1, 2001

## **Wildland Fire Operations**

NPS wildland fire operations will be significantly increased to improve fire suppression capabilities and expand hazardous fuels reduction programs, with increased emphasis on alleviating threats to communities near National Park units. To meet planning and compliance requirements of an expanded program, environmental and cultural resource specialist support will be increased. In addition, new burned area rehabilitation guidelines will be implemented to mitigate short and long-term detrimental consequences of severe wildland fires.

### Workforce Development

Expanded suppression and fuels management operations will require additional staff. Strategies to address staffing needs will be similar across program areas, therefore, refer to the Workforce Development goals and action items outlined above in the Wildland Fire Preparedness section.

### Suppression

Goal: Improve NPS mobilization of fire resources in the interagency arena to facilitate a rapid coordinated suppression response.

Action: Fill NPS staffing deficiencies at local dispatch centers and Geographic Area Coordination Centers.

Lead: Paul Broyles

Date: Ongoing

### Hazardous Fuels Reduction

#### *Wildland Urban Interface*

Goal: Reduce fuels in high-risk areas to protect communities.

Action: Complete list of ongoing and proposed NPS Wildland Urban Interface projects. Work with state and local governments to define communities at risk and associated project areas.

Lead: Mike Warren, Dick Bahr

Date: November 17, 2000

Action: Prepare prioritized list of NPS Wildland Urban Interface communities at risk and additional needs report.

Lead: Mike Warren

Date: December 11, 2000

Action: Complete list of NPS Wildland Urban Interface communities at risk with an explanation of why some communities are not being treated.

Lead: Mike Warren



Date: March 1, 2000

Action: Continue implementing NPS Wildland Urban Interface hazardous fuels reduction program.

Lead: Dick Bahr

Date: Ongoing

### *Fuels Management and Ecosystem Maintenance*

Goal: Reduce fuels in high-risk areas to protect natural and cultural resources and maintain ecosystem functions.

Action: Complete revision of NPS Wildland Fire Management Reference Manual (RM-18) that provides implementation guidance for prescribed fire.

Lead: Dick Bahr

Date: March 1, 2001

Action: Continue implementing NPS hazardous fuels reduction program.

Lead: Dick Bahr

Date: Ongoing

Action: Continue implementing NPS fuels management program to maintain fuels and promote healthy ecosystem components and functions.

Lead: Dick Bahr

Date: Ongoing

### Planning and Compliance

Goal: Conduct programmatic fire planning and compliance, including assessments, clearances, consultation, permitting, and analysis, in a manner that facilitates the accomplishment of hazardous fuels reduction targets and fire management plan development for the NPS.

Action: Complete the Compliance Report outlining procedures and strategies to expedite the planning and compliance process using input from cultural and environmental specialists.

Lead: Sarah Robertson, Tim Sexton

Date: November 22, 2000

Action: Conduct a compliance workload analysis for both fire management plan development and fuels reduction projects.

Lead: Tim Sexton

Date: November 22, 2000

Action: Produce formal agency guidance and direction for the Director's signature that addresses key internal compliance issues.

Lead: Sarah Robertson  
Date: December 15, 2000

Action: Continue development of National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 Programmatic Agreement for interagency fire management programs, including language to address Wildland Urban Interface issues.

Lead: Paul Gleeson  
Date: TBD

### *Burned Area Rehabilitation*

Goal: Prevent further degradation of resources following wildland fire, and mitigate threats of life, property, natural, and cultural resources.

Action: Complete Burned Area Rehabilitation Report.

Lead: Steve Botti  
Date: November 17, 2000

Action: Implement policy direction from the revised Departmental Manual on Burned Area Rehabilitation.

Lead: Steve Botti  
Date: pending Department Manual final signature

Action: Continue implementation of ongoing rehabilitation plans and projects.

Lead: Steve Botti  
Date: Ongoing

### **Rural Fire Assistance**

Effective response to wildland fires often requires a coordinated effort between NPS units and neighboring rural or volunteer fire departments that have limited resources. The 2001 Appropriations Act identifies a pilot effort to enhance the fire protection capability of rural fire districts through training, equipment purchase, and prevention activities on a cost-share basis.

Goal: Provide support and assistance to rural fire departments to increase their wildland firefighting capabilities and help them meet federal wildland firefighting standards.

Action: Conduct rural fire assistance needs assessment for each NPS unit, prioritize needs, and estimate funding requirements.

Lead: Paul Broyles  
Date: November 17, 2000

## **Summary**

This strategy serves to guide the process the NPS will use to implement the National Fire Plan. The NPS has already begun to carry out many of the strategies outlined in this report. An Action Plan and Financial Report due December 2000, will provide more detailed direction and actions. By completing the short-term actions, the NPS expects to have the procedures in place to implement the expanded program, beginning with the 2001 fire season. While immediate steps are being taken, the long-term success of the NPS wildland fire management program will depend upon sustained funding for the National Fire Plan.

## Summary of Action Items

### Oversight and Accountability

ACTION ITEM		LEAD	DUE DATE
1	Develop strategies and priorities for staffing, planning and support needs.	Sue Vap, Fred Bird	Nov. 17, 2000
2	Finalize Communications Plan.	Roberta D'Amico	Nov. 30, 2000
3	Complete the NPS Financial Report.	Steve Botti, Dean Berg	Dec. 1, 2000
4	Complete the NPS Action Plan.	Tom Zimmerman	Dec. 1, 2000
5	Prepare the NPS Performance Report.	Mike Warren	Nov.1, 2001
6	Complete final Federal/State Ten-Year Comprehensive strategy.	Rick Gale, Sue Vap	Aug. 1, 2001 (target)

### Wildland Fire Preparedness

ACTION ITEM		LEAD	DUE DATE
7	Prepare staffing analysis for wildland fire positions.	Chair, FMLB	Nov. 17, 2000
8	Prepare staffing needs analysis for technical, professional, and administrative positions that support the fire program.	Chair, FMLB	Nov. 17, 2000
9	Develop organizational design for the workforce.	Chair, FMLB	TBD
10	Evaluate existing position descriptions and develop new ones as needed.	Chair, FMLB	Dec. 15, 2000
11	Develop recruitment program.	Merrie Johnson	TBD
12	Develop training needs analysis.	Merrie Johnson	TBD
13	Conduct needs analysis for engines and helicopters.	Chair, FMLB	Nov. 17, 2000
14	Analyze contracting issues, including workload analysis for contracting needs; needs analysis for COR's; and utilization of electronic procurement acquisition process for fire management services.	Ken Till	Nov. 17, 2000
15	Review grant authorities to identify most useful tool to distribute funds to non-federal entities for fuels treatment projects.	John Lissoway	Nov.14, 2000
16	Reissue update call for NPS facilities construction.	Mike Warren	Dec. 31, 2000
17	Continue development of DOI five-year wildland fire management facilities list.	Mike Warren	Ongoing
18	Evaluate leasing vs. building new facilities.	Mike Warren	Ongoing

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1 9	Evaluate co-location of fire facilities.	Mike Warren	Ongoing
2 0	Develop prioritization scheme beyond DOI mandated process for wildand fire facilities.	Mike Warren	TBD
2 1	Complete computer system needs analysis.	Gladys Crabtree	TBD
2 2	Develop pilot prevention analysis process to be incorporated into FIREPRO.	Paul Broyles	Oct. 1, 2001

### Wildland Fire Operations

ACTION ITEM		LEAD	DUE DATE
2 3	Fill NPS staffing deficiencies at local dispatch centers and GACCs.	Paul Broyles	Ongoing
2 4	Prepare list of ongoing and proposed wildland urban interface (WUI) projects.	Mike Warren, Dick Bahr	Nov. 17, 2000
2 5	Prepare prioritized list of NPS WUI communities at risk and additional needs report.	Mike Warren	Dec. 11, 2000
2 6	Complete list of NPS WUI communities at risk and explanation of why some are not being treated.	Mike Warren	Mar. 1, 2001
2 7	Continue implementing NPS WUI hazardous fuels reduction program.	Dick Bahr	Ongoing
2 8	Complete revision of NPS Fire Management Reference Manual that provides implementation guidance for prescribed fire.	Dick Bahr	Mar. 1, 2001
2 9	Continue implementing NPS hazardous fuels reduction program.	Dick Bahr	Ongoing
3 0	Continue implementing NPS fuels management program for fuels and ecosystem maintenance.	Dick Bahr	Ongoing
3 1	Complete the NPS Compliance Report.	Sarah Robertson	Nov. 22, 2000
3 2	Conduct compliance workload analysis for fire management plans and fuels reduction projects.	Tim Sexton	Nov. 22, 2000
3 3	Produce formal guidance for the Director's signature that addresses key internal compliance issues.	Sarah Robertson	Dec. 15, 2000
3 4	Continue development of NHPA Sec. 106 Programmatic Agreement for interagency fire mgmt. programs, including WUI issues.	Paul Gleeson	TBD
3 5	Complete Burned Area Report (BAR).	Steve Botti	Nov. 17, 2000
3 6	Implement policy direction from revised Departmental Manual on BAR.	Steve Botti	Pending final signature
3 7	Continue implementation of ongoing rehabilitation plans and projects.	Steve Botti	Ongoing

### Rural Fire Assistance

ACTION ITEM		LEAD	DUE DATE
3 8	Conduct rural fire assistance needs assessment for each NPS unit, prioritize needs, and estimate funding requirements.	Paul Broyles	Nov. 17, 2000